



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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BISHOP'S CORNER



"AMIDA, I choose you!"

Bishop Eric Matsumoto

*Address delivered by Bishop Eric Matsumoto at the Opening Service of the 65th Jr. YBA State Convention held June 17-19, 2022 on the Big Island of Hawaii at the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin.

On behalf of the entire Sangha of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii from here, the Big Island to Kauai, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Hawaii Federation of Jr. Young Buddhist Associations as we gather for our 65th Jr. YBA State Convention, the first in person Convention after 2 virtual conventions.

Thank you for responding in gratitude to Amida Buddha's Great Love and Unconditional Compassion, being guided and inspired by the Dharma or Teachings and encouraging each other to continue being an integral part of the Hongwanji Sangha. At the foundation of everything is your Buddha Endowed Mind of True Entrusting/Shinjin/Faith in Amida Buddha. We owe so much to Amida Buddha who has been reaching out and calling out to us since time immemorial. As we find in the "The Teaching of Buddha" it says *"One should never forget that it is not because of one's own compassion that one has awakened faith (True Entrusting), but because of Buddha's compassion which long ago threw its pure light into human minds and dispelled the darkness of ignorance."*

Also, as we find in the famous "Parable of the Two Rivers and the White Path," Amida Buddha calls *"...with mind that is single, with right-mindedness, come at once! I will protect you. Have no fear of plunging [in]to...the [raging] water or fire [of greed and anger]."* How amazingly wonderful and kind of Amida Buddha, don't you think?

Amida Buddha is so concerned about you and me. In fact, many people are not even aware of the raging water of greed and the raging fire of anger. Some people are aware of it, but don't know what to do and thus in deep despair and grief. According to the Parable, Sakyamuni Buddha, the Historic Buddha, is encouraging us to seek refuge in Amida Buddha's Vow, Promise, which is unconditional in its acceptance and embrace or as I like to express it All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion. Amida Buddha is calling out to each and every one of us especially to those of us who are living in these Latter Days of the Buddhist Teachings, 1) a world of wars and where natural disasters abound, 2) there is confusion of values, 3) increased anger, greed and ignorance, 4) inferior quality of human life including egotism, and 5) the wasting and shortening of human life known as the 5 defilements. Sound familiar?

This week, I just visited my primary care physician for a semi-annual check-up. I noticed that since the Pandemic started physicians are asking, regularly, if people are experiencing depression and anxiety. It's probably due to the Pandemic because of the isolation and fear that it has caused and also could be because of all the social issues like racial discrimination, political divide, wars, and gun violence related mass shootings and so many other incidents which maybe affecting people very negatively with fear and despair. As, I continued my discussion with my doctor, our conversation shifted to how people, in general, seem to be reacting to all these situations with such intensity and hate. It reminds me of what is written in the Smaller Sutra about this Latter Age of the Dharma when the so called blind passions of anger, greed and ignorance greatly intensify and more. Yes, I thought, we are certainly living in such times (mappou) and how in such times, how important it is to respond to people and situations and not react. In too many instances, we react to other people and what is happening. Here is where Buddhism with its teachings of being mindful and reflecting including reflecting on oneself and especially Jodo Shinshu's emphasis on being aware of how easy it is for the "ugly" side of me to appear becomes really meaningful, important and relevant. A time, more than ever, when the Teachings of Namu Amida Butsu, become all the more appropriate and needed. However, as one source explains although it is the Last Dharma Age, "however, this typically was not a cause for despair, because this scheme was accompanied by teachings that the Buddha, having foreseen the coming of this dark age, had provided beforehand...(that) which were suitable for the time." Thus, indeed, it is the perfect age and time to, as our convention theme and slogan indicate "AMIDA, I choose you!" Jr. YBA members, thank you for choosing Amida Buddha.

However, have you ever wondered about the meaning of the 5th stanza of "Gassho to Amida" which says *"When I call Amida's Name, It's Amida calling me; Buddha's voice, my voice are one. I gassho to Amida"*? Or have you pondered why Rev. Kenryu Tsuji shared, *"Namu Amida Butsu...it is the song of gratitude not of my finding the Buddha, but Buddha finding me."* When I deeply reflect on our Convention Theme "AMIDA, I choose you!", I conclude that it is possible because Amida Buddha has already chosen you and me, actually chosen all of us! Amida Buddha initiates the call by imploring, please entrust yourself to me which is Namu Amida Butsu or the Buddha's Name Which Calls Me to entrust and I respond to the Buddha's Call by saying the same Namu Amida Butsu which is, now, Namu Amida Butsu, the Buddha's Name That I Call out in awareness, joy and gratitude. There is nothing, but Namu Amida Butsu.

Thus, as we start Convention, please reflect including self-reflect on the world and ourselves as bonbu/spiritually-foolish beings and come to realize the depth and breadth of Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion and live in full awareness and joyous appreciation of Amida Buddha's Great Love and Compassion reaching out, embracing us and nurturing us. Let's have a meaningful and fun Convention!

To slowly conclude, my gratitude to Lay Advisors of Jr. YBA especially Joy Nishida, Minister Advisors, and all other supporters of Jr. YBA for your assistance and help. A special shout of appreciation to the United Jr. YBA of Hawaii Island, this year's Convention host, especially Convention Co-Chairs Manami Alspach and Sara Igawa. Thank you to one and all!

Finally, let's recite Namu Amida Butsu, again, the Buddha's Name Which I Call in gratitude in response to Namu Amida Butsu, the Buddha's Name That Calls Me to entrust. Please join me in gassho/anjali. Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu/Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

HAWAII KYODAN FUNERAL SERVICE

Reverend Yoshiaki Fujitani, the 11th Bishop of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, passed away on May 17, 2021, at the age of 97. Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii sponsored funeral service has been rescheduled for Saturday, August 13, 2022 at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin. More detailed information will be shared later.

850th/800th JOINT CELEBRATION AND THE 17TH WORLD BUDDHIST WOMEN'S CONVENTION IN KYOTO IN 2023

Online registration is now available for the Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth & the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching and the 17th World Buddhist Women's Convention in Kyoto in 2023. If you are interested in, please contact your temple or Honpa Hongwanji Headquarters to get a registration link.

UPDATE FOR THE SADAKO PROJECT



Thank you so much for your support of the project of establishing an eternal flame monument in Hawaii for world peace for all peoples and nations and the creation of a documentary film on the late Sadako Sasaki. So far, we received \$850 from individual donors. We will continue to collect your donation until end of this month.

BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER (BSC) 50TH ANNIVERSARY PRESENTATION

Date & Time: Saturday, August 13, 10:00 am to 12 noon
Place: BSC and on YouTube
Guest Lecturer: Prof. Charles Hallisey
(Yehan Numata Senior Lecturer on Buddhist Literatures, Harvard Divinity School)
Topic: Learning from Shinran about Ourselves as Moral Persons



If you are planning to attend in-person, please register by emailing kwong@honpahi.org or calling 808-973-6555 in-person is limited to 30 people, masks are required.

About Prof. Hallisey, excerpts from an Ohio University Internet article:

An expert on Buddhist Literatures at the Harvard Divinity School, Hallisey said this time studying in both the United States and Sri Lanka led him to study Buddhism through the lens of its literature and the translation of text.

"I can see that people were studying Buddhism, not just as a religion, but as something of a culture and even something of a civilization," Hallisey said."

"To point of a translation isn't to understand primarily another world you won't have access to otherwise. Instead, it is to give you resources for understanding yourself," he said. ...

"As I learned more... I saw things I was learning about the Buddhist world (and) Buddhist ways of seeing the world. It helped me to make sense of the things that had happened to me," he said.

Date & Time: Saturdays, August 6 and 20, 10:30 am to 12 noon
Place: BSC and on YouTube
Guest Lecturer: Prof. Dennis Hirota
(Emeritus Professor of Shin Buddhist Studies and Research Fellow,
Ryukoku University and Head Translator, Collected Works of Shinran)
Topic: Encountering the Words of Shinran



Summary of the Content of Prof. Hirota's Workshops:

This workshop will introduce materials designed to help readers interested in understanding what Shinran said in his own words. Through the provided materials, it will be possible to become familiar with important passages from his writings as he wrote them. No prior knowledge of Japanese language is necessary.

During each workshop, we will practice reading sample passages from Shinran with the help of romanization, literal translation, and simple grammar notes.

After the workshop, it will be possible to continue using the materials for a number of important passages selected from Shinran's writings.

Please register for Prof. Hirota's Workshop by emailing kwong@honpahi.org or calling 808-973-6555.

Prof. Hallisey's Presentation and Prof. Hirota's Workshops will be immediately available on YouTube for viewing at any on BSC's YouTube channel: "BSC Hawaii"

BISHOP'S AWARD FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Japanese Language School committee honored following students who received Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bishop's Award at their Graduation of Award days in May 2022.

Fort Gakuen	8 th grader: Donovan Hu
Hilo Hongwanji Gakuen	6 th grader: Kaitlyn Liu
Hongwanji Mission School	8 th grader: Donovan Hu
Wailuku Hongwanji Gakuen	6 th grader: Kazumasa Trevor Amby 8 th grader: Sera Mieko Chang

SAVE THE DATE: UPCOMING EVENTS

2022 BSC SUMMER SESSION SATELLITE SEMINARS

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Scott Mitchell (author of “Mid-Century Modern Buddhism” and current Dean at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California)

June 25 th	Kauai: Online Lecture: 10 AM – 12 PM Topic: Buddhist Literature at Mid-Century
June 26 th	Maui: Wailuku Hongwanji Sunday Service (Guest Speaker) : 9 AM Lecture at Wailuku Hongwanji: 10:30 AM – 12 PM Topic: Jodo Shinshu and the Making of American Buddhism Big Island: Lecture at Kona Hongwanji and Online: 5 PM Topic: Japanese American Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists built religious infrastructure in the modern Buddhism in the USA
June 27 th	Big Island: Talk Story at Naalehu Hongwanji: 9 AM Lecture at Puna Hongwanji and Online: 2 PM Topic: Japanese American Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists built religious infrastructure in the modern Buddhism in the USA
June 28 th	Oahu: Lecture at Pearl City Hongwanji and Online: 7 PM Topic: Shin Buddhism, Modern Buddhism Click link to register: https://forms.gle/hEgfJ65jv3Vipxgn8